

# Ray McGovern: Russia-gate Evidence, Please

Was former FBI Director James Comey pulling a Hoover on Trump to keep him in line? asks Ray McGovern.

**By Ray McGovern**

*Special to Consortium News*



For those interested in evidence – or the lack of it– regarding collusion between Russia and the presidential campaign of Donald Trump, we can thank the usual Russia-gate promoters at *The New York Times* and CNN for inadvertently filling in some gaps in recent days.

Stooping to a new low, Friday's *Times* headline screamed: "F.B.I. Opened Inquiry Into Whether Trump Was Secretly Working on Behalf of Russia." The second paragraph noted that FBI agents "sought to determine whether Mr. Trump was knowingly working for Russia or had unwittingly fallen under Moscow's influence."

Trump had been calling for better relations with Russia during his presidential campaign. As journalist Michael Tracy tweeted on Sunday, the *Times* report made it "not a stretch to say: the FBI criminally investigating Trump on the basis of the 'national security threat' he allegedly poses, with the 'threat' being his perceived policy preferences re: Russia, could constitute literal criminalization of deviation from foreign policy consensus."

On Monday night CNN talking heads, like former House Intelligence Committee chair Mike Rogers, were expressing

wistful hope that the FBI had more tangible evidence than Trump's public statements to justify such an investigation. Meanwhile, they would withhold judgment regarding the Bureau's highly unusual step.

## **Evidence?**

NYT readers had to get down to paragraph 9 to read: "No evidence has emerged publicly that Mr. Trump was secretly in contact with or took direction from Russian government officials." Four paragraphs later, the *Times'* writers noted that, "A vigorous debate has taken shape among former law enforcement officials ... over whether FBI investigators overreacted."

That was what Republican Rep. Trey Gowdy was wondering when he grilled former CIA director John Brennan on May 23, 2017 on what evidence he had provided to the FBI to catalyze its investigation of Trump-Russia collusion.

Brennan replied: "I don't do evidence."

The best Brennan could do was repeat the substance of a clearly well-rehearsed statement: "I encountered and am aware of information and intelligence that revealed contacts and interactions between Russian officials and U.S. persons involved in the Trump campaign ... that required further investigation by the Bureau to determine whether or not U.S. persons were actively conspiring, colluding with Russian officials."

That was it.

CNN joined the piling on Monday, quoting former FBI General Counsel James Baker in closed-door Congressional testimony

to the effect that FBI officials were weighing “whether Trump was acting at the behest of [the Russians] and somehow following directions, somehow executing their will.” The problem is CNN also noted that Lisa Page, counsel to then FBI Acting Director Andrew McCabe, testified that there had been “indecision in the Bureau as to whether there was sufficient predication to open [the investigation].” “Predication” is another word for evidence.

Within hours of Comey’s firing on May 9, 2017, Page’s boyfriend and a top FBI counterintelligence official, Peter Strzok texted her: “We need to open the case we’ve been waiting on now while Andy [McCabe] is acting [director].” After all, if Trump were bold enough, he could have appointed a new FBI director and who knew what might happen then. When Page appeared before Congress, she was reportedly asked what McCabe meant. She confirmed that his text was related to the Russia investigation into potential collusion.

### **Comey v. Trump Goes Back to Jan. 6, 2017**

The *Times* and CNN, however unintentionally, have shed light on what ensued after Trump finally fired Comey. Apparently, it finally dawned on Trump that, on Jan. 6, 2017, Comey had treated him to the time-honored initiation-rite-for-presidents-elect – with rubrics designed by former FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover.

It seems then-FBI Director James Comey rendered a good impersonation of Hoover that day when he briefed President-elect Trump on the scurrilous “Steele dossier” that the FBI had assembled on Trump. Excerpts from an interview Trump

gave to the *Times*(below) after the firing throw light on what Trump says was at least part of his motivation to dump Comey.

To dramatize the sensitivity of the dossier, Comey asked then-National Intelligence Director James Clapper and the heads of the CIA and NSA to depart the room at the Trump Tower, leaving Comey alone with the President-elect. The Gang of Four had already briefed Trump on the evidence-impooverished "Intelligence Community Assessment." That "assessment" alleged that Putin himself ordered his minions to help Trump win. The dossier had been leaked to the media, which withheld it but *Buzzfeed* [published it](#) on Jan. 10.?

### **'This Russia Thing'**

Evidently, it took Trump four months to fully realize he was being played, and that he couldn't expect the "loyalty" he is said to have asked of Comey. So Trump fired Comey on May 9. Two days later he [told](#) NBC's Lester Holt:

"When I decided to just do it, I said to myself, I said, 'You know, this Russia thing with Trump and Russia is a made-up story, it's an excuse by the Democrats for having lost an election that they should've won.'"

The mainstream media and other Russia-gater aficionados immediately seized on "this Russian thing" as proof that Trump was trying to obstruct the investigation of alleged Russian collusion with the Trump campaign. However, in the Holt interview Trump appeared to be reflecting on Comey's J. Edgar Hoover-style, one-on-one gambit alone in the room with Trump.

Would Comey really do a thing like that? Was the former FBI director protesting too much in his June 2017 testimony to the Senate Intelligence Committee when he insisted he'd tried to make it clear to Trump that briefing him on the unverified but scurrilous information in the dossier wasn't intended to be threatening. It took a few months but it seems Trump figured out what he thought Comey was up to.

### **Trump to NYT: 'Leverage' (aka Blackmail)**

In a long Oval Office [interview](#) with the *Times* on July 19, 2017, Trump said he thought Comey was trying to hold the dossier over his head.

"...Look what they did to me with Russia, and it was totally phony stuff. ... the dossier ... Now, that was totally made-up stuff," Trump said. "I went there [to Moscow] for one day for the Miss Universe contest, I turned around, I went back. It was so disgraceful. It was so disgraceful.

"When he [James B. Comey] brought it [the dossier] to me, I said this is really made-up junk. I didn't think about anything. I just thought about, man, this is such a phony deal. ... I said, this is – honestly, it was so wrong, and they didn't know I was just there for a very short period of time. It was so wrong, and I was with groups of people. It was so wrong that I really didn't, I didn't think about motive. I didn't know what to think other than, this is really phony stuff."

The dossier, paid for by the Democratic National Committee and the Clinton campaign and compiled by former British spy Christopher Steele, relates a tale of Trump allegedly cavorting with prostitutes, who supposedly urinated on each

other before the same bed the Obamas had slept in at the Moscow Ritz-Carlton hotel. [On February 6, 2018, *The Washington Post* [reported](#) that that part of the dossier was written by Cody Shearer, a long-time Clinton operative and passed it along to Steele. Shearer ignored a request for comment from **Consortium News**. [Shearer had been a Consortium advisory board member who was asked to resign and left the board.]

Trump told the *Times*: “I think [Comey] shared it so that I would – because the other three people [Clapper, Brennan, and Rogers] left, and he showed it to me. ... So anyway, in my opinion, he shared it so that I would think he had it out there. ... As leverage.

“Yeah, I think so. In retrospect. In retrospect. You know, when he wrote me the letter, he said, ‘You have every right to fire me,’ blah blah blah. Right? He said, ‘You have every right to fire me.’ I said, that’s a very strange – you know, over the years, I’ve hired a lot of people, I’ve fired a lot of people. Nobody has ever written me a letter back that you have every right to fire me.”

*McGovern lays out more details during a 12-minute [interview](#) on Jan. 10 with Tyrel Ventura of “Watching the Hawks.”*

**Ray McGovern works with Tell the Word, a publishing arm of the ecumenical Church of the Saviour in inner-city Washington. A CIA analyst for 27 years and Washington area resident for 56 years, he has been attuned to these machinations. He is co-founder of Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS).**

---

---

# Giuliani Says Assange Should Not Be Prosecuted

Donald Trump's lawyer said on Monday that WikiLeaks publisher Julian Assange should not be prosecuted and he compared WikiLeaks publications to the Pentagon Papers.

**By Joe Lauria**

*Special to Consortium News*

Rudy Giuliani, a lawyer for President Donald Trump, said Monday that WikiLeaks publisher Julian Assange had not done "anything wrong" and should not go to jail for disseminating stolen information just as major media does.

"Let's take the Pentagon Papers," Giuliani told Fox News. "The Pentagon Papers were stolen property, weren't they? It was in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. Nobody went to jail at *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*."

Giuliani said there were "revelations during the Bush administration" such as Abu Ghraib. "All of that is stolen property taken from the government, it's against the law. But once it gets to a media publication, they can publish it," Giuliani said, "for the purpose of informing people."

"You can't put Assange in a different position," he said. "He was a guy who communicated."

Giuliani said, "We may not like what [Assange] communicates, but he was a media facility. He was putting that information out," he said. "Every newspaper and station grabbed it, and published it."

The U.S. government has admitted that it has indicted Assange for publishing classified information, but it is battling in court to keep the details of the indictment secret. As a lawyer and close advisor to Trump, Giuliani could have influence on the president's and the Justice Department's thinking on Assange.

Giuliani also said there was no coordination between the Trump campaign and WikiLeaks. "I was with Donald Trump day in and day out during the last four months of the campaign," he said. "He was as surprised as I was about the WikiLeaks disclosures. Sometimes surprised to the extent of 'Oh my god, did they really say that?' We were wondering if it was true. They [the Clinton campaign] never denied it."

Giuliani said: "The thing that really got Hillary is not so much that it was revealed, but they were true. They actually had people as bad as that and she really was cheating on the debates. She really was getting from Donna Brazile the questions before hand. She really did completely screw Bernie Sanders."

"Every bit of that was true," he went on. "Just like the Pentagon Papers put a different view on Vietnam, this put a different view on Hillary Clinton."

Giuliani said, "It was not right to hack. People who did it should go to jail, but no press person or person disseminating that for the purpose of informing did anything wrong."

Assange has been holed up as a refugee in the Ecuador embassy in London for the past six years fearing that if he were to leave British authorities would arrest him and

extradite him to the U.S. for prosecution.

You can watch the entire Fox News interview with Giuliani here:

**Joe Lauria is editor-in-chief of Consortium News and a former correspondent for *The Wall Street Journal*, *Boston Globe*, *Sunday Times* of London and numerous other newspapers. He can be reached at [joelauria@consortiumnews.com](mailto:joelauria@consortiumnews.com) and followed on Twitter [@unjoe](https://twitter.com/unjoe) .**

---

## There's Still Time to Make a 2018 Tax-Deductible Contribution to Maintain Bob Parry's Legacy

Time is running out to make a tax-deductible donation for your 2018 returns to help keep **Consortium News** going.

If you want to keep reading original articles by Ray McGovern, Max Blumenthal, Pepe Escobar, Patrick Lawrence, Annie Machon, and more please take this opportunity to make a tax-deductible contribution to **Consortium News**.

**Consortium News** is one of the few websites where you can find a different angle on the news—one suppressed by the dominant corporate media. Unlike many other websites, we pay our writers for original articles, marked as *Special to Consortium News*. Their contributions make up the vast majority of what we publish. We have a new deputy editor helping to put out our fact-checked articles and we've incorporated a lot more video and added many new

writers. All this, plus managing the site and its business administration, costs money.

If you think **Consortium News**, the earliest independent news website in history, founded in 1995, should continue in the tradition of its founder Robert Parry, please dig deep and offer what you can. **Consortium News** is counting on you.

***Please give today to our end-of-year fund drive, by clicking Donate.***

**Thank you!**

---

## VIDEO: Pilger Says Assange Denies Meeting Manafort

*The Guardian* has claimed Paul Manafort visited Julian Assange at the Ecuador embassy. John Pilger visited Assange and tells CN's Joe Lauria Assange strongly denied any such meeting.

**Pilger: 'Julian is a touchstone for opposition'**

By Joe Lauria

## *Special to Consortium News*

**W**ikiLeaks publisher Julian Assange has vehemently denied that he ever met Donald Trump's former campaign manager, according to journalist and filmmaker John Pilger, who met with Assange at Ecuador's embassy in London last week.

Pilger said Assange told him the story published by *The Guardian* on Nov. 27 was a "total fabrication." Pilger told **Consortium News** in an interview for the Unity4J vigil on Friday that "I personally can confirm that did not happen. He said it was a fabrication. It was not possible. The way internal security works at that embassy, it was not possible."

Pilger called *The Guardian* story "an indication of a kind of degradation of the media today and especially of the 'respectable' media. We discussed that a great deal."

Pilger said Assange had been the target of attacks "over the years" that have come "thick and fast." He said: "And for one man to cope with them is an extraordinary feat. Only occasionally does he express anger—he does it as anyone of us would feel—say on an attack like *The Guardian's* utterly false story."

### **First Visit Since March**

Pilger had not visited Assange since before March, when the Ecuadorian government imposed a ban on his internet and phone connection, and limited visitors to his lawyers and family members.

Pilger's impression on seeing him again is that Assange has

lost no sharpness of mind after more than six years confined to a small space in the embassy, and now nine months cut off from the outside world.

“He’s in very good spirits,” Pilger said. “The extraordinary resilience of this man is something to behold. In his own personality, intellectually he is Julian.”

“I can’t say what he’s feeling. His health is probably holding steady but he urgently needs comprehensive diagnostic work done,” said Pilger.

“But people should know that Julian’s spirits, his whole sense of ‘to hell with them,’ and his own resolve to stand up to those who would want to do a great injustice to him is undiminished,” he said. “He’s not leaving, they will have to throw him out. He’s not going anywhere.”

The United States government has admitted that it has indicted Assange for publishing classified documents that revealed apparent U.S. war crimes and corruption. Assange fears that if he leaves the embassy British authorities would arrest him on bail skipping charges and then extradite him to the U.S. for prosecution.

### **Touchstone of Opposition**

Pilger said *The Guardian* story was the best example he could think of that expresses today’s Cold War. “I’ve never known it to be as explicit as it is now. And that fabricated *Guardian* story ... is an example of that.”

He said: “In the first Cold War there was an opposition in those days. There isn’t a popular opposition now. The so-called liberal opposition is so confused, so disorientated,

and so, almost wretched, in its uncertainty of its true allegiances, in its collusion, that there isn't a major anti-war movement."

"In many ways, Julian is a touchstone for opposition to so much of what is happening in our world," said Pilger. "Of all the cases that illustrate resistance to that, there is none like that of Julian Assange."

"And he needs public, popular support. He needs people to go into the street outside the embassy. To go in the streets all over the world, as they have done in the past," Pilger said.

You can watch the entire, original video of the 20 minute interview with John Pilger here:

---

## Michael Isikoff Cuts His Losses at 'Russian Roulette'

Michael Isikoff, one of the biggest proponents of the Russia-gate story now says that Robert Mueller's investigation is "not where a lot of people would like it to be," says Ray McGovern.

**By Ray McGovern**

*Special to Consortium News*



Last Saturday, veteran Washington journalist Michael Isikoff began a John Ehrlichman/Watergate-style "modified limited hangout" regarding the embarrassing overreach in his Russia-gate "collusion" reporting. He picked an unctuous, longtime fan, radio host John

Ziegler, to help him put some lipstick on the proverbial pig. Even so, the interview did not go so well.

Those who can muster some residual empathy for formerly serious reporters who have gotten Russia-gate so wrong, may feel genuine sadness at this point. Those fed up with pretense, unprofessionalism, and dodging, however, will find it hard to listen to the audible squirming without a touch, or more, of *Schadenfreude* – the word Germans use to denote taking joy at the misfortune of others.

In a word, it proved hard to square the circle inside which Isikoff and other Russia-gate aficionados have been living for more than two years after last week's disclosures. Ziegler's repeated expressions of admiration for Isikoff's work, plus his softball questions, utterly failed to disguise Isikoff's disappointment that Robert Mueller's Russia-gate investigation is "not where a lot of people would like it to be."

"A lot of people" includes Isikoff.

Commenting on the trove of legal and other documents now available, Isikoff pretty much conceded that he and his co-writer, journalist David Corn were, in effect, impersonating serious investigative journalists when they published in April 2017 their gripping Russia-gate *chef d'oeuvre*: "Russian Roulette: The Inside Story of Putin's War on America and the Election of Donald Trump."

### **Steele Dossier**

Aware of the credulity given by Isikoff and Corn to the "Steele dossier," Ziegler began with what he apparently thought was a softball observation/question. "Would you agree that a lot of what is in the Steele Dossier has been at least somewhat vindicated?"

"No," said Isikoff flatly.

The conversation turned to so-called "logical" explanations for

leaps of faith rather than analysis. Such as unsubstantiated accusations, like the so-called “pee-tape” that Isikoff now says is “likely false.”

A “modified limited hangout” is when someone’s cover story is blown and some truth needs to be divulged to deflect further inquiry. Isikoff’s begins at the 26:50 mark and goes on, churning one’s stomach for 30 minutes.

A better subtitle for Isikoff and Corn’s book might be “Based on What We Wanted to Believe Was a True Story.”

Isikoff told Ziegler that unless “Saint” Robert Mueller, as Democrats see him, can summon a Deus ex Machina to provide some actual evidence linking Trump or his campaign to collusion with Russia, former Isikoff acquaintances, like me, might legitimately ask, “What the hell happened to you, Mike?”

Isikoff and Corn have done some serious work together in the past. Their 2006 book, “Hubris: The Inside Story of Spin, Scandal, and the Selling of the Iraq War” – was an accurate chronicle of the Cheney/Bush March of Folly into Iraq. That was also against a Republican administration. But they had interviewed people from both sides of the issues.

Though neither were fans of George W. Bush, they backed up their work with facts. “Russian Roulette” is a different story. It reads now like desperation to confirm what the authors hoped Mueller would find. He has failed them.

### **Is This Journalism?**

Who can adequately explain the abject loss of journalistic standards when it comes to Russia-gate?

For Isikoff and Corn, as for other erstwhile serious journalists, there should be more crow than ham or turkey to eat in the weeks ahead.

Others come to mind: Jane Mayer of *The New Yorker*; James Risen, formerly of *The New York Times*; and lesser lights like McClatchy's Greg Gordon; Marcy Wheeler, Amy Goodman's go-to Russia-gate pundit at [emptywheel.net](http://emptywheel.net); and extreme-partisan Democrat Marc Ash, who runs Reader Supported News.

Many had pinned their hopes on Trump's 24-day national security adviser, Gen. Michael Flynn, to supply grist for the "collusion" mill. That increased when word came he'd met 19 times with Mueller's investigators as a cooperative witness.

Yet, something didn't gel. Prosecutors said they'd go light on Flynn.

### **In (and Out) Like Flynn**

Philip Ewing, the apparent odd-man-out at National Public Radio, [observed](#) Saturday: "Does that sound like the attitude they [the prosecutors] would take with someone who had been serving as a Russian factotum and who had been serving as a foreign agent from inside the White House as national security adviser, steps away from the Oval Office?"

Flynn was supposed to be sentenced for lying to the FBI on Tuesday. By afternoon, however, Federal District Court Judge Emmet G. Sullivan postponed the sentencing until at least March. The judge said he was "disgusted" by Flynn's "very serious" crimes but later apologized from the bench for asking whether his actions might have been treasonous.

He gave Flynn the option of delaying sentencing until he had completed his cooperation with federal prosecutors, and Flynn agreed. But Sullivan remained adamant that Flynn could still end up in jail. If His Honor takes the time to read Professor Jonathan Turley, of the George Washington University Law School, [about](#) Comey-endorsed FBI tactics – and not confine his reading solely to the Washington Post – it seems a safe bet he will give Flynn a stay-out-of jail card.

In an early morning tweet Tuesday, Trump wished Flynn good luck and commented: "Will be interesting to see what he has to say, despite tremendous pressure being put on him, about Russian Collusion." How can one interpret this? Either Mueller and his score of investigators were unable to get Flynn to spill the beans on collusion or – could it be possible? – there are no beans to spill.

### **Hold That Line**

As for Isikoff and Corn, their profession – such as it is these days – can be expected to circle the wagons and give them the immunity granted 15 years ago to the faux-journalists who pushed the Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) deception so hard – even after no WMD were found in Iraq.

Indeed, in recent days *The New York Times* and *Washington Post* have launched what looks like a stepped-up pre-emptive attack, lest readers start to doubt their rendering of Russia-gate. The headlines and the drivel that follow have been caricatures of journalism.

Be not misled about Russia-gate, *The Washington Post* editorial board wrote Tuesday morning. "It is no longer disputable."

The analogy with mainstream media regurgitating fraudulent "facts" on Weapons of Mass Destruction before the invasion of Iraq is complete. How many recall then-Secretary of State Colin Powell telling the world on February 5, 2003 that his evidence and conclusions were "irrefutable and undeniable."

### **Hardly New**

John Swinton, a prominent journalist in New York in 1880, at a banquet, reportedly responded to a toast to the "independent press," by saying: "There is no such thing as an independent press. You know it and I know it. ... What folly is this toasting an independent press?"

"We are the tools and vassals of rich men behind the scenes. We are the jumping jacks; they pull the strings and we dance. Our talents, our possibilities and our lives are all the property of other men. We are intellectual prostitutes."

*Plus ca change ...*

Ray McGovern works with Tell the Word, a publishing arm of the ecumenical Church of the Saviour in inner-city Washington. Part of his job as a CIA analyst for 27 years was to analyze Soviet propaganda. He now experiences considerable nostalgia examining the propaganda put out by U.S. mainstream media. When you get the hang of it, it's pretty easy, IF you know where to look.

*Please give to our end-of-year fund drive, by  
clicking [Donate](#).*

---

## Diane Duston on Her Late Husband, Robert Parry

Bob Parry worked at his job nearly every waking hour. Diane Duston asked him why he kept it up. Her husband's answer was pretty simple. It's what journalists are supposed to do, he said.

**Dear Readers:**

It has been almost a year since the death of my husband, **Consortium News** founder Robert Parry. The stroke he mentioned in the final piece he wrote for **Consortium News** was the first of three, caused by undiagnosed pancreatic cancer. It has been a challenging year for me and our family since he passed away on Jan. 27, but one of the things that has given us comfort is the continuation of his journalism through the website he founded.

The only way this can live on is through your donations. I urge you to contribute today so [Consortiumnews.com](http://Consortiumnews.com) will thrive and grow.

A lot has happened in Washington since Bob wrote his last piece. But one thing that has not changed is the need for independent journalism. Bob was fond of saying, "I don't care WHAT the truth is. I just care what the truth IS."

I met Bob in the 1980s at the Associated Press where we both worked. As a member of the special assignments team, he was delving into inconsistencies about what the Reagan administration was saying and what it was doing. Eventually, his work led to revelations that became known as the Iran-Contra scandal. I never ceased in my admiration for Bob's dogged pursuit of the truth, no matter what might happen politically. It took patience and long hours of documents research. It required source development and double-triple-quadruple fact-checking. It meant going to battle with editors who were worried about political fall-out. It wasn't easy. I was a journalist, too, but I didn't have the same kind of drive. Few do, really.

In 31 years of marriage, I remained in awe of his persistent quest for truth. He worked at it nearly every waking hour. I asked him why he kept it up. His answer was pretty simple. It's what journalists are supposed to do, he said.

It hadn't brought him any particular financial rewards. His books never became best-sellers. He didn't seek praise from anyone, and he was irrationally modest about the awards he received. He eschewed self-promotion. He was too busy practicing journalism.

[Consortiumnews.com](http://Consortiumnews.com) is home for those who are interested in truth and fearless journalism. You can help keep this important mission alive. Please send a [donation](#) today.

***Please consider [making a donation](#) to Consortium News during our Winter Fund Drive.***

Here is the last piece that Bob Parry wrote:

# An Apology and Explanation

**From Editor Robert Parry:** For readers who have come to see **Consortium News** as a daily news source, I would like to extend my personal apology for our spotty production in recent days. On Christmas Eve, I suffered a stroke that has affected my eyesight (especially my reading and thus my writing) although apparently not much else. The doctors have also been working to figure out exactly what happened since I have never had high blood pressure, I never smoked, and my recent physical found nothing out of the ordinary. Perhaps my personal slogan that “every day’s a work day” had something to do with this.

Perhaps, too, the unrelenting ugliness that has become Official Washington and national journalism was a factor. It seems that since I arrived in Washington in 1977 as a correspondent for The Associated Press, the nastiness of American democracy and journalism has gone from bad to worse. In some ways, the Republicans escalated the vicious propaganda warfare following Watergate, refusing to accept that Richard Nixon was guilty of some extraordinary malfeasance (including the 1968 sabotage of President Johnson’s Vietnam peace talks to gain an edge in the election and then the later political dirty tricks and cover-ups that came to include Watergate). Rather than accept the reality of Nixon’s guilt, many Republicans simply built up their capability to wage information warfare, including the creation of ideological news organizations to protect the party and its leaders from “another Watergate.”

So, when Democrat Bill Clinton defeated President George H.W. Bush in the 1992 election, the Republicans used their news media and their control of the special prosecutor apparatus (through Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist and Appeals Court Judge David Sentelle) to unleash a wave of investigations to challenge Clinton's legitimacy, eventually uncovering his affair with White House intern Monica Lewinsky.

The idea had developed that the way to defeat your political opponent was not just to make a better argument or rouse popular support but to dredge up some "crime" that could be pinned on him or her. The GOP success in damaging Bill Clinton made possible [George W. Bush's disputed "victory" in 2000](#) in which Bush took the presidency despite losing the popular vote and almost certainly losing the key state of Florida if all ballots legal under state law were counted. Increasingly, America – even at the apex of its uni-power status – was taking on the look of a banana republic except with much higher stakes for the world.

Though I don't like the word "weaponized," it began to apply to how "information" was used in America. The point of **Consortium News**, which I founded in 1995, was to use the new medium of the modern Internet to allow the old principles of journalism to have a new home, i.e., a place to pursue important facts and giving everyone a fair shake. But we were just a tiny pebble in the ocean. The trend of using journalism as just another front in no-holds-barred political warfare continued – with Democrats and liberals adapting to the successful techniques pioneered mostly by Republicans and by well-heeled conservatives.

Barack Obama's election in 2008 was another turning point as Republicans again challenged his legitimacy with bogus claims about his "Kenyan birth," a racist slur popularized by "reality" TV star Donald Trump. Facts and logic no longer mattered. It was a case of using whatever you had to diminish and destroy your opponent.

We saw similar patterns with the U.S. government's propaganda agencies developing themes to demonize foreign adversaries and then to smear Americans who questioned the facts or challenged the exaggerations as "apologists." This approach was embraced not only by Republicans (think of President George W. Bush distorting the reality in Iraq in 2003 to justify the invasion of that country under false pretenses) but also by Democrats who pushed dubious or downright false depictions of the conflict in Syria (including blaming the Syrian government for chemical weapons attacks despite strong evidence that the events were staged by Al Qaeda and other militants who had become the tip of the spear in the neocon/liberal interventionist goal of removing the Assad dynasty and installing a new regime more acceptable to the West and to Israel).

More and more I would encounter policymakers, activists and, yes, journalists who cared less about a careful evaluation of the facts and logic and more about achieving a pre-ordained geopolitical result – and this loss of objective standards reached deeply into the most prestigious halls of American media. This perversion of principles – twisting information to fit a desired conclusion – became the *modus vivendi* of American politics and journalism. And those of us who insisted on defending the journalistic principles of

skepticism and evenhandedness were increasingly shunned by our colleagues, a hostility that first emerged on the Right and among neoconservatives but eventually sucked in the progressive world as well. Everything became “information warfare.”

## **The New Outcasts**

That is why many of us who exposed major government wrongdoing in the past have ended up late in our careers as outcasts and pariahs. Legendary investigative reporter Seymour Hersh, who helped expose major crimes of state from the My Lai massacre to the CIA’s abuses against American citizens, including illegal spying and LSD testing on unsuspecting subjects, has literally had to take his investigative journalism abroad because he uncovered inconvenient evidence that implicated Western-backed jihadists in staging chemical weapons attacks in Syria so the atrocities would be blamed on Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. The anti-Assad group think is so intense in the West that even strong evidence of staged events, such as the first patients arriving at hospitals before government planes could have delivered the sarin, was brushed aside or ignored. The Western media and the bulk of international agencies and NGOs were committed to gin up another case for “regime change” and any skeptics were decried as “Assad apologists” or “conspiracy theorists,” the actual facts be damned.

So Hersh and weapons experts such as MIT’s Theodore Postol were shoved into the gutter in favor of hip new NATO-friendly groups like Bellingcat, whose conclusions always fit neatly with the propaganda needs of the Western powers.

The demonization of Russian President Vladimir Putin and Russia is just the most dangerous feature of this propaganda process – and this is where the neocons and the liberal interventionists most significantly come together. The U.S. media's approach to Russia is now virtually 100 percent propaganda. Does any sentient human being read the New York Times' or the Washington Post's coverage of Russia and think that he or she is getting a neutral or unbiased treatment of the facts? For instance, the full story of the infamous Magnitsky case cannot be told in the West, nor can the objective reality of the Ukraine coup in 2014. The American people and the West in general are carefully shielded from hearing the "other side of the story." Indeed to even suggest that there is another side to the story makes you a "Putin apologist" or "Kremlin stooge."

Western journalists now apparently see it as their patriotic duty to hide key facts that otherwise would undermine the demonizing of Putin and Russia. Ironically, many "liberals" who cut their teeth on skepticism about the Cold War and the bogus justifications for the Vietnam War now insist that we must all accept whatever the U.S. intelligence community feeds us, even if we're told to accept the assertions on faith.

## **The Trump Crisis**

Which brings us to the crisis that is Donald Trump. Trump's victory over Democrat Hillary Clinton has solidified the new paradigm of "liberals" embracing every negative claim about Russia just because elements of the CIA, FBI and the National Security Agency produced a report last Jan 6 that blamed Russia for "hacking" Democratic emails and releasing

them via WikiLeaks. It didn't seem to matter that these "hand-picked" analysts (as Director of National Intelligence James Clapper called them) evinced no evidence and even admitted that they weren't asserting any of this as fact.

The hatred of Trump and Putin was so intense that old-fashioned rules of journalism and fairness were brushed aside. On a personal note, I faced harsh criticism even from friends of many years for refusing to enlist in the anti-Trump "Resistance." The argument was that Trump was such a unique threat to America and the world that I should join in finding any justification for his ouster. Some people saw my insistence on the same journalistic standards that I had always employed somehow a betrayal.

*Please give to our end-of-year fund drive, by clicking [Donate](#).*

Other people, including senior editors across the mainstream media, began to treat the unproven Russia-gate allegations as flat fact. No skepticism was tolerated and mentioning the [obvious bias among the never-Trumpers](#) inside the FBI, Justice Department and intelligence community was decried as an attack on the integrity of the U.S. government's institutions. Anti-Trump "progressives" were posturing as the true patriots because of their now unquestioning acceptance of the evidence-free proclamations of the U.S. intelligence and law enforcement agencies.

Hatred of Trump had become like some invasion of the body snatchers – or perhaps many of my journalistic colleagues had never believed in the principles of journalism that I had embraced throughout my adult life. To me, journalism

wasn't just a cover for political activism; it was a commitment to the American people and the world to tell important news stories as fully and fairly as I could; not to slant the "facts" to "get" some "bad" political leader or "guide" the public in some desired direction.

I actually believed that the point of journalism in a democracy was to give the voters unbiased information and the necessary context so the voters could make up their own minds and use their ballot – as imperfect as that is – to direct the politicians to take actions on behalf of the nation. The unpleasant reality that the past year has brought home to me is that a shockingly small number of people in Official Washington and the mainstream news media actually believe in real democracy or the goal of an informed electorate.

Whether they would admit it or not, they believe in a "guided democracy" in which "approved" opinions are elevated – regardless of their absence of factual basis – and "unapproved" evidence is brushed aside or disparaged regardless of its quality. Everything becomes "information warfare" – whether on Fox News, the Wall Street Journal editorial page, MSNBC, the New York Times or the Washington Post. Instead of information provided evenhandedly to the public, it is rationed out in morsels designed to elicit the desired emotional reactions and achieve a political outcome.

As I said earlier, much of this approach was pioneered by Republicans in their misguided desire to protect Richard Nixon, but it has now become all pervasive and has deeply corrupted Democrats, progressives and mainstream journalism. Ironically, the ugly personal characteristics of Donald

Trump – his own contempt for facts and his crass personal behavior – have stripped the mask off the broader face of Official America.

What is perhaps most alarming about the past year of Donald Trump is that the mask is now gone and, in many ways, all sides of Official Washington are revealed collectively as reflections of Donald Trump, disinterested in reality, exploiting “information” for tactical purposes, eager to manipulate or con the public. While I’m sure many anti-Trumpers will be deeply offended by my comparison of esteemed Establishment figures with the grotesque Trump, there is a deeply troubling commonality between Trump’s convenient use of “facts” and what has pervaded the Russia-gate investigation.

My Christmas Eve stroke now makes it a struggle for me to read and to write. Everything takes much longer than it once did – and I don’t think that I can continue with the hectic pace that I have pursued for many years. But – as the New Year dawns – if I could change one thing about America and Western journalism, it would be that we all repudiate “information warfare” in favor of an old-fashioned respect for facts and fairness – and do whatever we can to achieve a truly informed electorate.

**The late Robert Parry broke many of the Iran-Contra stories in the 1980s for the Associated Press and Newsweek. He founded Consortiumnews.com in 1995 as the Internet’s first investigative magazine. He saw it as a way to combine modern technology and old-fashioned journalism to counter the increasing triviality of the mainstream U.S. news media.**

***Please give to our end-of-year fund drive, by***

*clicking [Donate](#).*

---

## Become a Member of Consortium News

**Consortium News** is offering readers to become members of the first independent news site on the Web, founded by legendary journalist Bob Parry in 1995.

To show your support for **Consortium News** and help expand its reach you can join our membership program today.

Members who contribute \$150 will receive a set of four books written by our founding editor, the late Bob Parry: *Fooling America*, *Lost History*, *Neck Deep*, and *America's Stolen Narrative*.

If you donate \$175 you will receive Bob's books plus a DVD of his groundbreaking documentary for PBS Frontline on the October Surprise.

The third level of membership for \$200 will give you Bob's books, the DVD and an invitation to meet Editor-in-Chief Joe Lauria at a venue in the Washington DC area twice a year to discuss the future of **Consortium News**. Members who do not live in the Washington area can take part in twice yearly online discussions with the editor.

All contributions are tax-deductible.

Questions? Contact [info@consortiumnews.com](mailto:info@consortiumnews.com)

*Become a member of Consortium News today by giving to our end-of-year fund drive. Click [Donate](#)!*

---

# Yes, Virginia, There Is a Deep State and Bob Parry Exposed It

In his efforts to uncover the Iran-Contra plot and the machinations surrounding Russia-gate, Bob Parry was in the forefront of journalists exposing the inner workings of the Deep State, recalls Ray McGovern during our Winter Fund Drive.

**By Ray McGovern**

*Special to Consortium News*



A year ago yesterday, it became fully clear what was behind the feverish attempt by our intelligence agencies and their mainstream media accomplices to emasculate President Donald Trump with the Russia-gate trope.

It turned out that the objective was not only to delegitimize Trump and make it impossible for him to move toward a more decent relationship with Russia.

On December 12, 2017, it became manifestly clear that it was not only the usual suspects – the Military-Industrial-Congressional-Intelligence-Media-Academia-Think-Tank Complex, namely, the Boeings, Lockheeds, and Raytheons profiteering on high tension with Russia; not only greedy members of Congress upon whom defense contractors lavish some of their profits; not only the TV corporations controlled by those same contractors; and not only the Democrats desperately searching for a way to explain how Hillary Clinton could have lost to the buffoon we now have in the White House.

No, it was deeper than that. It turns out a huge part of the motivation behind Russia-gate was to hide how the Department of Justice, FBI, and CIA (affectionately known as the Deep State) – with their co-opted “assets” in the media – interfered in the 2016 election in a gross attempt to make sure Trump did not win.

### **Russia-gate: *Cui Bono?***

This would become crystal clear, even to cub reporters, when the text exchanges between senior FBI officials Peter Strzok and girlfriend Lisa Page were released exactly a year ago. Typically, readers of *The New York Times* the following day would altogether miss the importance of the text-exchanges.

Readers of Robert Parry’s article on December 13, 2017, “The Foundering Russia-gate ‘Scandal,” would be gently led to understand the importance of this critical extra dimension explaining the the media-cum-anonymous-intelligence-sources frenzied effort to push the prevailing Russia-gate narrative, and – and how captivated and unprofessional the mainstream media had become.

***Please give to our end-of-year fund drive by clicking Donate.***

Bob Parry did not call me frequently to compare notes, but he did call on Dec. 12, 2017 for a sanity check on the release of the Strzok-Page texts. FBI Agent Peter Strzok interviewed Hillary Clinton on her servers (and led that investigation); he was the hand-picked FBI agent who took part in the Jan 2017 light-weight intelligence “assessment” that blamed Russia for the 2016 election result, and he was on special counsel Robert Mueller’s staff investigating alleged Russian interference. Bob and I agreed on the texts’ significance, and I was tempted to volunteer a draft to appear the next day. But it was clear that Bob wanted to take the lead, and it would turn out to be his last substantive piece. He had already laid the groundwork with three articles earlier that month. (All three are worth reading again. Here are the links.)



Here's how Bob began his article on the Strzok-Page bombshell.  
(Not a fragment of it seemed to impact mainstream media.):

"The disclosure of fiercely anti-Trump text messages between two romantically involved senior FBI officials who played key roles in the early Russia-gate inquiry has turned the supposed Russian-election-meddling "scandal" into its own scandal, by providing evidence that some government investigators saw it as their duty to block or destroy Donald Trump's presidency.

"As much as the U.S. mainstream media has mocked the idea that an American 'deep state' exists and that it has maneuvered to remove Trump from office, the text messages between senior FBI counterintelligence official Peter Strzok and senior FBI lawyer Lisa Page reveal how two high-ranking members of the government's intelligence/legal bureaucracy saw their role as protecting the United States from an election that might elevate to the presidency someone as unfit as Trump."

### **Parry's *Cri de Coeur***

Fast forwarding just two weeks, Bob had a stroke on Christmas Eve, which seriously affected his eyesight. By New Year's Eve 2017, though, he was able to "apologize" (typical Bob) to **Consortium News** readers for not filing for two weeks.

In January, he had additional strokes. When I visited him in the hospital, he was not himself. What is indelible in my memory, though, is the way he kept repeating from his hospital bed: "It's too much; it's just too much, too much."

What was too much?

Since Bob told me how hard he had to struggle, with impaired vision, to put together his Dec. 31 piece, and since what he wrote throws such light on Bob and the prostitution of the profession he loved so much, I include a few excerpts below. (Forgive me, but I

cannot, for the life of me, pare them down further.)

These paragraphs from Bob are required reading for those who want to have a some clue as to what has been going on in Washington, and the Faustian bargain Strzok – sorry, I mean struck – between the media and the Deep State. Here’s what Bob, clear-eyed, despite fuzzy eyesight, wrote:

“On Christmas Eve, I suffered a stroke that has affected my eyesight (especially my reading and thus my writing) although apparently not much else. The doctors have also been working to figure out exactly what happened since I have never had high blood pressure, I never smoked, and my recent physical found nothing out of the ordinary. Perhaps my personal slogan that ‘every day’s a work day’ had something to do with this.

“Perhaps, too, the unrelenting ugliness that has become Official Washington and national journalism was a factor. It seems that since I arrived in Washington in 1977 as a correspondent for The Associated Press, the nastiness of American democracy and journalism has gone from bad to worse. ...

“More and more I would encounter policymakers, activists and, yes, journalists who cared less about a careful evaluation of the facts and logic and more about achieving a pre-ordained geopolitical result –and this loss of objective standards reached deeply into the most prestigious halls of American media. This perversion of principles –twisting information to fit a desired conclusion – became the modus vivendi of American politics and journalism. And those of us who insisted on defending the journalistic principles of skepticism and evenhandedness were increasingly shunned by our colleagues ... Everything became ‘information warfare.’ ...

“The demonization of Russian President Vladimir Putin and Russia is just the most dangerous feature of this propaganda process – and this is where the neocons and the liberal interventionists

most significantly come together. The U.S. media's approach to Russia is now virtually 100 percent propaganda. Does any sentient human being read the New York Times' or the Washington Post's coverage of Russia and think that he or she is getting a neutral or unbiased treatment of the facts? ... The American people and the West in general are carefully shielded from hearing the 'other side of the story.' Indeed to even suggest that there is another side to the story makes you a 'Putin apologist' or 'Kremlin stooge.'

"Western journalists now apparently see it as their patriotic duty to hide key facts that otherwise would undermine the demonizing of Putin and Russia. Ironically, many 'liberals' who cut their teeth on skepticism about the Cold War and the bogus justifications for the Vietnam War now insist that we must all accept whatever the U.S. intelligence community feeds us, even if we're told to accept the assertions on faith. ...

"The hatred of Trump and Putin was so intense that old-fashioned rules of journalism and fairness were brushed aside. On a personal note, I faced harsh criticism even from friends of many years for refusing to enlist in the anti-Trump 'Resistance.' The argument was that Trump was such a unique threat to America and the world that I should join in finding any justification for his ouster. Some people saw my insistence on the same journalistic standards that I had always employed somehow a betrayal.

"Other people, including senior editors across the mainstream media, began to treat the unproven Russia-gate allegations as flat fact. No skepticism was tolerated and mentioning the obvious bias among the never-Trumpers inside the FBI, Justice Department and intelligence community was decried as an attack on the integrity of the U.S. government's institutions. Anti-Trump 'progressives' were posturing as the true patriots because of their now unquestioning acceptance of the evidence-free proclamations of the U.S. intelligence and law enforcement

agencies.

“Hatred of Trump had become like some invasion of the body snatchers –or perhaps many of my journalistic colleagues had never believed in the principles of journalism that I had embraced throughout my adult life. To me, journalism wasn’t just a cover for political activism; it was a commitment to the American people and the world to tell important news stories as fully and fairly as I could; not to slant the ‘facts’ to ‘get’ some ‘bad’ political leader or ‘guide’ the public in some desired direction.”

Robert Parry, who exposed Deep State skullduggery in the Iran-Contra affair, died on January 27, 2018. Our corrupt media, though, live on in infamy. Strokes and pancreatic cancer were the cause. But I think Bob was also a casualty of the stress caused by the Faustian media/Deep State bargain. It was just “too much.”

**Ray McGovern works with Tell the Word, a publishing arm of the ecumenical Church of the Saviour in inner-city Washington. Bob Parry was happily surprised when he learned that CIA and other intelligence analysts, as opposed to operations people, were as devoted as he was to spreading some truth around; he welcomed our input – in particular the corporate memos from Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity; the VIPS archive on CN appears at: <https://consortiumnews.com/vips-memos/>**

***Please give to our end-of-year fund drive by clicking [Donate](#).***

---

## A Concise History of Consortium News by Robert Parry

During the 2011 Winter Fund Drive, ex-CIA analyst (and peace activist) Ray McGovern suggested that the late Bob Parry write a brief narrative to explain Consortium News’ history and goals.

(If you want to donate to our end-of-year fund drive, please click [Donate](#).)

# A Brief Narrative of Consortium News

By Robert Parry

*Special to Consortium News*



In 1995, after more than two decades in the mainstream news media (AP, Newsweek and PBS), I founded Consortiumnews.com as a home for the serious journalism that no longer had a place in an American news business that had lost its way.

At the time, I was the lead journalist on what had become known as the Iran-Contra scandal, and I had watched first-hand as senior news executives chose to squelch that inquiry apparently out of fear that it would cause another impeachment crisis around another Republican president, Ronald Reagan.

Such a possibility was deemed “not good for the country,” a view held both inside Congress and in the boardrooms of the elite national news media. But I refused to accept the judgment. I continued to pursue the many loose ends of the scandal, from evidence of drug trafficking by Reagan’s beloved Nicaraguan Contras to suspicions that the arms-for-hostages deals with Iran started much earlier, possibly even during the 1980 presidential campaign.

My insistence on getting to the bottom of this historically important story alienated me from my senior editors at Newsweek and from many of my journalistic colleagues who simply wanted to keep their jobs and avoid trouble. But it offended me that the national press corps was signing off on what amounted to a high-level cover-up.

The era of Watergate had come full circle. Instead of exposing crimes and cover-ups, the Washington press corps' job had changed into harassing and mocking serious investigators the likes of Iran-Contra special prosecutor Lawrence Walsh who stayed on the trail.

Consistency and persistence were oh so passe'. The Washington news media had drifted into a culture of careerism where top jobs paid well into the six- and even seven-figures. Your hair style and glib presentation on TV were far more important than the quality of your reporting. And the most important thing was to avoid the wrath of right-wing attack groups who would "controversialize" you.

By the mid-90s, it had become clear to me that there was no feasible way to do the work that had to be done within the confines of the mainstream media. The pressures on everyone had grown too intense. No matter how solid the reporting, many issues were simply off limits, particularly scandals that reflected badly on the admired duo of Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush.

Even when I obtained highly classified government documents in 1994-95 shedding light on how U.S. policies toward Iraq and Iran had evolved at the start of the Reagan-Bush era, this information could find no home even in the liberal outliers of the mainstream media.

## **Quitting the Mainstream**

So, on the advice of my oldest son Sam, who told me about this strange new phenomenon called the Internet, I started this Web site in fall 1995.

Besides seeing Consortiumnews.com as a place for serious journalism, I also envisioned it as a refuge for quality journalists who faced the same frustrations that I did. I thought we could provide editing and financial support, as well as an outlet that would distribute their stories to the public. Hence, the rather clunky name, Consortiumnews. At the time, I thought I

could raise a significant amount of money for the project.

However, during my initial contacts with public-interest and liberal foundations, I was told that a major objection to funding journalism was the cost. The feeling was that information was an expensive luxury. But I thought I could prove that assumption wrong by applying old-fashioned journalistic standards to this new medium.

To start the Web site the first of its kind on the Internet I cashed out my Newsweek retirement fund and we began producing groundbreaking reporting original to the Web. Over time, we showed that quality journalism could be done at a bargain-basement price.

Yet, despite our journalistic success, foundations and large funders remained skittish. We became an IRS-recognized 501-c-3 non-profit in 1999 (as the Consortium for Independent Journalism) and received some modest grants, but we have never been funded at the level that I had hoped.

Indeed, at the start of the crucial 2000 presidential campaign, our financial situation had grown so dire that I was forced to take an editing job at Bloomberg News and put the Web site on a part-time basis. We still published some important stories about the campaign, including how unfairly the Washington press corps was treating Al Gore and how outrageous the Florida recount was, but we didn't have the impact that we could have had.

During the run-up to the invasion of Iraq in 2002-03, we also challenged Washington's conventional wisdom, which was solidly behind George W. Bush's case for war. But again our voice was muted.

Finally, in early 2004, I felt it was important to pull together our volumes of original material about the Bush Family before that year's election. For personal financial reasons, I couldn't leave Bloomberg News until April (and I must admit it wasn't easy stepping away from a six-figure salary). But I felt I had no

choice.

After quitting, I accelerated the pace at Consortiumnews.com and got to work on a book that became *Secrecy & Privilege*, the history of the Bush Dynasty.

After George W. Bush got his second term, we still kept at it at Consortiumnews.com, contesting his claims about the Iraq War and his broader neoconservative strategy, which combined violence in the Middle East with an assault on civil liberties at home. I felt it was especially crucial to explain the real history of U.S. relations with Iran and Iraq, a narrative that had been grossly distorted by the cover-ups in the 1980s and early 1990s.

### **MSM and CIA Parallels**

To my great satisfaction, we also began developing what might be regarded as unlikely relationships with former CIA analysts, such as Ray McGovern, Peter Dickson, Melvin Goodman and Elizabeth Murray. Though these CIA folks had been trained not to talk to journalists like me, it turned out they also were looking for places to impart their important knowledge.

I found that our experiences had run on parallel tracks. In the 1980s, as the Washington press corps was facing intense pressure to toe the Reagan-Bush line, the CIA analysts were experiencing the same thing inside their offices at Langley. It became clear to me that the Right's central strategy of that era had been to seize control of the information flows out of Washington.

To do so required transforming both CIA analysts and Washington journalists into propagandists. The crowning achievement of that project had been the cowering CIA "analysis" and the fawning "journalism" that had been used to whip up popular support for George W. Bush's invasion of Iraq in 2003.

And that is where I fear we still stand, stuck in a dangerous swamp of disinformation, spin and lies.

Though the election of Barack Obama in 2008 showed that the Right's propaganda machine is not all-powerful, it remains the most intimidating political force in the United States. It can literally create scandals out of nothing, like the "birther" controversy that persuaded many Americans that Obama was born in Kenya despite clear evidence to the contrary. On economic topics, millions of Americans are convinced to oppose their own best interests.

Today, the Right along with much of the Washington mainstream media is reprising the propagandistic treatment of Iraq regarding Iran, with a new conflict increasingly likely as the American public again gets whipped up into a war frenzy.

Still, my hope remains that we can finally gain the financial backing that we need at Consortiumnews.com to be a strong voice for truth and a way to maintain the best principles of journalism in order to counteract the exaggerations and hysteria that are again taking hold in America.

If you want to help us, you can make a donation by credit card at the Web site or by check to Consortium for Independent Journalism (CIJ); 2200 Wilson Blvd.; Suite 102-231; Arlington VA 22201. Or you can use PayPal (our account is named after our e-mail address "consortnew@aol.com").

Since we are a 501-c-3 non-profit, your donation may be tax-deductible. We appreciate any size donation that you can afford.

Here are some other ways you can help us continue our work:

If you'd rather spread out your support in smaller amounts, you can sign up for a monthly donation.

As always, thanks for your support.

Robert Parry

**The late Robert Parry broke many of the Iran-Contra stories in the 1980s for the Associated Press and Newsweek. He founded**

Consortiumnews.com in 1995 as the Internet's first investigative magazine. He saw it as a way to combine modern technology and old-fashioned journalism to counter the increasing triviality of the mainstream U.S. news media.

Please give to our end-of-year fund drive, by clicking [Donate](#).

---

## Kwiatkowski Gets 2018 Sam Adams Award. Read the Citation and Her Acceptance Speech Here.

Here is Karen Kwiatkowski's acceptance speech for the 2018 Sam Adams Award at a ceremony in Washington on Saturday night, preceded by the citation, that was read by former CIA analyst Ray McGovern.

### Citation

#### Karen Kwiatkowski

"If you see something, say something," we so often hear. Karen Kwiatkowski took that saying to heart.

She saw her Pentagon superiors acting as eager accomplices to the Cheney/Bush administration's deceit in launching a war of aggression on Iraq. And she said something – and helped Knight Ridder reporters Warren Strobel and Jonathan Landay see beneath the official lies and get the sordid story right **before** the war.

Karen's courage brings to mind the clarion call of Rabbi Abraham Heschel against the perpetrators of an earlier war – Vietnam. "Few are guilty," he said, "but all are responsible. Indifference to evil is more insidious than evil itself." Karen would not be

indifferent to evil.

Ed Snowden, Sam Adams awardee in 2013, noted that we tend to ignore some degree of evil in our daily life, but, as Ed put it, "We also have a breaking point and when people find that, they act." As did Karen. As did 16 of Karen's predecessors honored with this award.

With all the gloom and doom enveloping us, we tend to wonder whether people with the conscience and courage of Ed or Karen still exist in and outside our national security establishment. Our country is in dire need of new patriots of this kind.

Meanwhile, we call to mind the courageous example not only of Karen and Ed, but also of Coleen Rowley and Elizabeth Gun, our first two awardees, who took great risks in trying to head off the attack on Iraq. And we again honor Chelsea Manning and Julian Assange who is now isolated in what the UN has called "arbitrary detention," for exposing the war crimes resulting from that war.

Karen Kwiatkowski has made her own unique contribution to this company of conscience and courage, and Sam Adams Associates are pleased to honor her.

*Presented this 8th day of December 2018 in Washington by admirers of the example set by the late CIA analyst, Sam Adams. Know all ye by these presents that Karen Kwiatkowski is hereby honored with the traditional Sam Adams Corner-Brightener Candlestick Holder, in symbolic recognition of her courage in shining light into dark places.*

## **'Thoughts on the Sam Adams Award': Remarks by Lt. Col. Karen Kwiatowski**

I am honored beyond belief to be the 2018 recipient of the Sam Adams Award, and I thank Ray McGovern and the Sam Adams Associates for Integrity in Intelligence, Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity, Warren Strobel and Jonathan Landay of Knight Ridder during the run up to the second invasion of Iraq, and Rob Reiner for putting together a great movie that was so consistently truthful, that for me, it looked almost like a documentary. I want to also thank the late David Hackworth, a man I never met who published my first anonymous essays from the Pentagon, and of course, Lew Rockwell, who has published so many of my essays examining and trying to understand our government and our offensive policies over the past 15 years.

There have been many American patriots and truth tellers who have received the honor you have given me tonight – and I am going to name them here because I stand in awe of all of them:

Coleen Rowley of the FBI; Katharine Gun of British Intelligence; Sibel Edmonds of the FBI; Craig Murray, former UK ambassador to Uzbekistan; Sam Provance, former US Army Sgt; Maj. Frank Grevil of Danish Army Intelligence; Larry Wilkerson, Col., US Army (ret.), former chief of staff to Colin Powell at State; Julian Assange, of WikiLeaks; Thomas Drake, of NSA; Jesselyn Radack, formerly of Dept. of Justice and now National Security Director of Government Accountability Project; Thomas Fingar, former Deputy Director of National Intelligence and Director, National Intelligence Council, and Edward Snowden, former contractor for the National Security Agency; Chelsea Manning, US Army Private who exposed (via WikiLeaks) key information on

Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as State Department activities; and to retired National Security Agency official William Binney, who challenged decisions to ignore the Fourth Amendment in the government's massive – and wasteful – collection of electronic data.

Again, I am very humbled and almost speechless tonight. But not entirely speechless.

My backstory is pretty well-known to most people here, and to anyone who was interested in understanding US war policy in the early 2000s. I had a small role to play, in concert with a number of other truth tellers in media and in the national security bureaucracy. For every one of us, there were probably 20 to 50 people working beside us and around us, who understood a lot about what was happening, and who probably got a funny feeling about being in an organization where we all swore to uphold the Constitution, but in fact were engaged in promulgating lies of both omission and commission, mistruths and misdirection, aimed not at our enemies abroad but against the American people.

We were lying, with the help of a compliant and war-supportive media, to patriots young and old. Millions of Americans were eager to enlist, to fight, to sacrifice their life and health – for a made-up government fairy tale.

A sense of unease, I believe, was shared by many, many people who never blew a whistle, and never said a word. To their credit, some of these people passively resisted within their organizations, and tried to set things straight where they could. Some of these people simply called their assignments guy and got orders out of the Pentagon, others

were removed if they resisted too much. There is always a cost when you seriously question the directions or actions of the bureaucracy that employs you.

It is in our country's interest – as security professionals, as intelligence professionals, as soldiers and citizens, as writers and newsmakers – to be sensitive to the lawlessness, the immorality, and the wrongdoing of the bureaucracies and the leaders of the organizations we are a part of. That is the first thing we must cultivate and encourage – a sensitivity to and an awareness of something as simple as right and wrong. This is fundamental. From knowing right and wrong, we move to the factor that motivates so many whistleblowers, something that we all share as human beings, and that is an idea of justice.

The truth tellers who have been honored with Sam Adams Award, and thousands of others we may not be aware of around the world, share a concept of justice. For those who try to correct our U.S. government, particularly in its initiation and exercise of war, state-sanctioned murder and physical devastation of whole societies, we as American have tools that many others around the world don't have. We have a Constitution that many of us swore to uphold. Americans tend to have a good grounding in the fundamentals of right and wrong, derived from religion or tradition, or both. We live in something that calls itself a Republic, and it is a fine form of government, with a solid set of rules.

But how do we get from a certain moral discomfort, from seeing something going on around us that is wrong, to trying to do something about it? How do we decide if we want to leave the room, turn our backs, put our head down, or

instead take some sort of action that will put us on a collision course with very powerful people? What if we, as truth tellers, are like blind men describing an elephant – we see only one part of a larger story? How do we decide that our faith in our leadership is misplaced, and that more is at stake than just our jobs?

When you look at the experiences of people who made the dangerous and difficult decision to act, like Daniel Ellsberg, and Sam Adams, and Sibel Edwards, Jesselyn Raddick, Colleen Rowley, Thomas Drake, Ed Snowden, Julian Assange, and many others, you realize that speaking up and doing the right thing had a primary impact. That impact wasn't improved transparency, a more informed democracy, a more aware and alert citizenry and better government decisions by our elected leaders.

Those were all secondary impacts, and in many cases tenuous, as the improved level of national understanding seems to last for less than a single generation. No, the primary impact was the unimaginable wrath of the state aimed at the life, livelihood, reputation, family, character and credibility of the truth teller. In several cases, this included physical and psychological abuse, prison time, gag orders, and even more devious programs. The rage of the state against these truth tellers is not impulsive and short-lived – it is a forever project funded by tax dollars, and fueled by very profitable agendas.

Knowing all of this, can we really expect to see a healthy and growing flow of truth tellers, whistleblowers, and simply bold honest people speaking out about government lies?

I think we can, and I am optimistic about the possibilities of better government through honest, bold, and forthright people working in and around this government.

To start with, as I mentioned, we as government employees and uniformed service-members need to have a solid sense of right and wrong. We need to cultivate a sense of justice. In a wonderful way, our younger generations are well prepared for this, at least in terms of cultivating a sense of justice. The young people we see portrayed, often disparagingly, as young socialists may not completely understand the nature of government or the state, but they do cherish ideas of justice.

We also need people in government service who are sensitive to what is going on in their organizations, and how people are feeling and behaving around them. It is not coincidence that many of the people who have been honored by this award are women, who may be paying closer attention to the mood and morality of their organizations. There's a country song that has a line in it about "Old men talking about the weather, and old women talking about old men." We need both in our organizations, to be in tune with what is happening, and who is leading us.

We need people in government service who are willing to walk away from a job, and to say or even broadcast why they are leaving, without worrying about the next job, without worrying about being blacklisted, without worrying that they can't make their next house payment or college tuition payment, or the alimony or child support payment. We need people in government who travel light, so to speak, and do their job because they love what they are doing and what it

stands for.

This grounding and lack of rigid self-identification with their employing bureaucracy is extremely important. Thanks to technology and societal evolution, the younger generations of Americans are very likely to walk away from a job that they believe to be immoral, to act to correct what they see as wrong or unjust, and incidentally, are less likely to own a home, and more likely to define themselves by what they believe and stand for, not where they work, and how many promotions they had planned for themselves in that organization.

But even with our younger generations coming into government service – with a good sense of justice, a strong sense of self, and a willingness to speak openly about what they believe and know – there is risk when someone questions the collective government story.

There is risk in the act of challenging authority and one's peer group, risk of being wrong and suffering loss of credibility. There is the rational and real risk of incurring the rage of the state, and being jailed, harmed, ruined and even killed on the whispers of an incensed or threatened agency.

There is another risk that we really don't talk about much. I think most concerning for many people is the risk that you are actually right, that you have discovered something damning and dark in your country, in your government, in your organization. Once this happens, if it happens, your life is irreversibly changed, and nothing is ever going to be the same. Understanding how your government actually

works, in particular how it works to create and provoke war and murder, how it works to extract the wealth of the nation and use this blessing to commit Constitutional crimes and untold evil, in your name – for many this understanding is not a gift, but a curse. I estimate at least 10% of our country, 20 – 30 million Americans, many of them veterans the U.S. Empire's global adventures in the past 50 years, feel this curse, and many of them deal with it by turning away from the dark side of Washington D.C., and not talking, writing, or speaking about what they know.

If anyone has followed the case of former Marine Sergeant Brandon Raub a few years ago, you realize that the government keeps a close and paranoid eye on what veterans are doing and saying. Given how things work today, they may be wise to turn away silently from the truth they know.

I think this is why it is often hard for us to demand more truth-tellers come forward, especially in the defense and security and intelligence arena, when we should be shouting it from the rooftops.

Some years ago, I did an online radio program where I would interview interesting people, like Ray McGovern and Sam Provance and Sibel Edmonds , among many others. One person, in our conversation, expressed surprise that I was a short (formerly) brown haired woman, when he thought I would be a tall blonde. I was reminded of this when watching Shock and Awe, because Rob Reiner and the writers did not know who I was, and they portrayed me as a tall light-haired woman, a modern day Viking of sorts. Notwithstanding that this is a popular and attractive stereotype, I think there is something to be learned here. We want to believe that anyone

who stands up to authority, who knows his or her own mind, who is willing to enter into a battle of wills with the state, and to take a risk is somehow taller, stronger, bolder and braver than the rest of us.

But it isn't true. There is something remarkably childlike and simple in being honest, in observing without fear what is happening around you, and reporting this to the person who pays the bills. In the case of the national security arena, the bill payer is the American people.

To tell the truth is simple, honorable, and good for the health of the Republic. The fact that it drives the security apparatus and the government crazy is just icing on the cake. Granted, we all need jobs, and our mental health, and we don't want to be imprisoned, tortured or killed. But the more of us – specifically those working with and inside the US government today – who tell the truth, the less likely that government embarrassment will result in harm to a whistleblower, and the less likely in the long run that we will see whistleblowers as we tend to see them today.

In a world of that values honesty, they would be receiving the public commendation of a proud Congress, a grateful media and President, and a contented population.

I'm not a Pollyanna, and I'm worried about the role the US government is playing at home and abroad. The kind of devastation that the US tolerates, supports and initiates around the world – Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, of course Yemen comes to mind, the horrendous situation that Julian Assange is still facing as we speak – is not limited to “overseas.”

The industrial warfare state is as dangerous to Americans as it is to Iraqis, Syrians, and Yemenis. The arts of the warfare state are already being practiced here, against Americans. We – average Americans – are increasingly controlled, spied on, monitored, tracked, threatened, boxed in, and shut down by tools that were first used and tested on some contrived wartime enemy.

You don't need me to tell you this, it's in every newspaper every day, on every page. It is our modern reality. Truth and transparency are its only antidote, and truth and transparency needs all of us. To live in a society, to be a citizen, to love your country – you cannot sleepwalk through it.

People who value wisdom, people who value common sense, people who value justice and people who believe that being woke is a good thing – congratulations! You are the majority! You are alive, you are in charge of this country, and you can choose. America is worth preserving, healing, and saving – and if she is to be saved we will do it by first learning the difference between the truth and a lie, and then speaking the truth loudly, boldly, to anyone who will listen, over and over and over again.

---